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ocrat in Worcester County, Maryland, anxious to prevent his political brethren from uniting themselves with this new party, concluded to address a letter to the Hon. Henry A. Wise, of Virginia, asking from him such an expression of his opinion as could be used to deter Democrats from joining the Know-nothing organization, to which Mr. Wise replied as follows :

ONANCOCK, Va., June 29, 1855.

DEAR SIR: At my earliest convenience I reply to yours of the 15th inst., by saying briefly that I am fully convinced the K. Nothing organization had its origin in Old England. It is a foreign influence, sent over here to abolish slavery or dissolve our Union. This is its aim and origin in New England and the North. Seeing its potency in all the slave-holding States, the Whigs generally of the South have seized on it for political purposes. And the worst of its evil everywhere is its priestcraft element, which seizes on Protestant bigotry to pollute our churches and corrupt our political powers. No sensible Democrat will be caught in its snare, and the sound and conservative will alike eschew it. With thanks for your kind congratulations, I am, respectfully yours,

HENRY A. WISE.

GEO. H. RICHARDSON, Esq.

That Mr. Richardson could not have struck Know-nothingism a severer blow, in so far as they hoped to be aided by Democratic disaffection, is apparent when it is known that Mr. Wise was much respected and admired by the Democrats in Mr. Richardson's section of country, having, in the preceding presidential campaign of 1852, made many telling and forcible speeches in their district against General Scott, the Whig candidate. The result also showed that this letter was most effectual for the purpose for which it was intended, for although Know-nothingism still flourished because of its Whig adherents, the Democrats almost unanimously let it alone, and many of those who had become members of Know-nothing societies renounced their allegiance to their new favorite and went joyfully back into the Democratic party. For these reasons, and because it is sought by some to revive for present or immediate future use some of the features of Know-nothingism, I have thought that these sentiments of Mr. Wise deserve a wider publicity than have hitherto been accorded them.

WM. TINGLE DICKERSON.

IV.

THE "STATE SOVEREIGNTY" HERESY.

IN his interesting essay on the "Life and Character of John C. Calhoun" (NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, Vol. CXLV., p. 254), Mr. Jefferson Davis uses this language :

"No more dangerous and vicious heresy has grown up than the supposition that ours is a government made and controlled by a majority of the people *en masse*."

The term "heresy" here designates an opinion in opposition to some established or usually received doctrine ; namely, in the present case, the proposition that ours is a government made and controlled, not by a majority of the people of the United States, but by certain corporate entities, originally known as "Colonies," and now as "States." This is manifest from the subsequent use of the terms "has grown up," which imply a heresy of recent origin.

Let us briefly inquire, then, whether the opinion that ours is a government made and controlled by a majority of the PEOPLE, be a "heresy" of "recent origin."

In 1765 the British Parliament asserted the general right to bind the colonists by its acts, and the specific right to tax them without their consent. The denial

of this right by the colonists, and the attempt by the British Government to enforce it, led to the Revolution. The moving force of that revolution was the general Congress at Philadelphia, of September, 1774, and it was composed, as the records of the time inform us, of "delegates nominated," not by the colonial governments, but by "the good people of these colonies." The people of all the colonies were ultimately represented therein; and it was, in the fullest sense, a revolutionary body. It exercised sovereign power, and "the people" whom it represented, by recognizing its authority, placed themselves on a revolutionary footing. And they did this as moral persons, not as colonial agents. In other words, the measures taken by the Congress could be translated from mere words into actual deeds only by the consent of "the whole people," in whose name it had been convoked; and to the extent that it assumed power to itself and adopted measures national in their character, to that extent did "the people" of the several colonies declare themselves, not a confederation of distinct *peoples* or communities, but "ONE people" represented by one government.

Moreover, from September, 1774, to March, 1781 (a period of nearly seven years), this revolutionary Congress was recognized by all the colonies as a *de jure*, no less than as a *de facto* national government. As such it came into contact with foreign powers, and as such it entered into engagements, the binding force of which, on the whole people, has never been questioned. During all this time the colonial governments had not taken a single step that could place them before the world, or before the mother country, either as *de facto* or as *de jure* sovereign States. They remained dependent upon the British Government until the revolutionary Congress "of the whole people" declared, "in the name of the people," these united colonies to be "free and independent States."

Thus, the transformation of "Colonies" into "States" was the result, not of independent action by the colonial governments, nor yet of the Colonies themselves as such, but of the whole People *en masse*, through their representatives in the revolutionary Congress. Each "Colony" became a "State" only in so far as it belonged to "the United States," and so far only as its population constituted a part of "the People" of the "United States." The national government (known as the Federal Union) is therefore necessarily older than any of the States, since it created them as "States; and since the States are the creatures of the Union, not one of them ever had a legal status outside of the Union. Not one of them ever had a State Constitution independent of the Union. [See speech of Mr. King, in Constitutional Convention, June 19, 1787, reported in the Madison Papers; also, Elliott's Deb. v., p. 212; Story's Comm. I., sec. 213-216; Dallas' Rep., III., p. 232; Curtis' Rep., I., p. 176.]

It seems to me, therefore, that the "heresy" which so much disturbs Mr. Davis is co-existent with the Government itself; and that in point of fact, it is no "heresy" at all, since it antagonizes no established or generally received doctrine connected with the early history of our Government.

WILLIAM L. SCRUGGS.